

april 2003

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# commerce matters

*North Dakota*  
LEGENDARY

### Tourism, Coca-Cola in partnership

North Dakota history is making its mark on Coca-Cola bottles. The newest glass commemorative Coca-Cola bottle features the official North Dakota Lewis & Clark Bicentennial logo and will soon be available statewide.

"Coca-Cola is an example of business partnering with

the state to highlight the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial," said Bill Goetz, Governor's Advisory Board chairman.

"This Coca-Cola partnership underscores the importance of Lewis and Clark as a marketing tool for the state. ...

This new Coca-Cola bottle showcases North Dakota's impact on the important expedition."

The Lewis & Clark Bicentennial has officially begun and

the new Coca-Cola bottle will help commemorate the special event, said Todd Wegenast, area manager for Midwest Coca-Cola Bottling Company. "We are proud to be the official soft drink of the North Dakota Lewis & Clark Trail and contribute to the state's bicentennial efforts. We feel very connected to the well-being of the state and are glad to participate in this partnership," he said.

"As part of the North Dakota Lewis & Clark Merchandising Program, we made it possible for commercial vendors like Coca-Cola to brand products with the

bicentennial logo," said North Dakota Tourism Division Director Sara Otte Coleman. ●

### North Dakota big draw internationally

North Dakota is as popular as ever among Europeans as a tourist destination.

Fred Walker, North Dakota Tourism's international marketing director, considers the ITB trade and travel show in Berlin a success for the state. Leads were up five over last year, to 49, and up from just 22 in 2001. Over 9,000 exhibitors greeted an estimated 60,000 attendees. Many expressed interest in traveling to the United States in general, and North Dakota in particular. The state's exhibit experienced a steady flow, perhaps inspired by articles in the German media. American Journal and TERRA are both running multi-page features on North Dakota.

"The media has portrayed North Dakota as a quality destination and we hope the travelers are buying in," Walker said. "We ended the show with more appointments than any other year. So, our initial fears that the USA pavilion would face a boycott were not realized." ●

### Tourism awards presented

Governor John Hoeven highlighted this year's State Tourism Conference in Bismarck by presenting the annual tourism awards.

The awards recognize leaders in the tourism industry. The Private Travel and Tourism Entity Award was given



The new Lewis and Clark Coke bottle.

to Holly and Lynn Dewhirst of Lone Butte Ranch. The Dewhirsts began booking clients into their cabin south of Theodore Roosevelt National Park's North Unit in 1998, and they have since expanded the business into a successful tourism/guest business.

In addition to providing a unique ranch vacation, the Dewhirsts also share information with guests about surrounding tourism opportunities.



Tourism Division Director Sara Otte Coleman, left, and Governor John Hoeven present a tourism award to Lynn and Holly Dewhirst of Lone Butte Ranch at the State Tourism Conference.

The Public or Non-Profit Travel and Tourism Award went to Garrison's Dickens Village Festival, an annual event held in December in Garrison. The event transforms the town into a Dickens Village, with all of the amenities. The Front-Line Travel and Tourism Employee Award went to Richard Horner, manager of the Devils Lake Park System. Horner is a 27-year employee of the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department. The Travel and Tourism Industry Leader Award was given to Terri Thiel, executive director of the Dickinson Convention and Visitors Bureau. Thiel was instrumental in the development of the Dakota West Adventures brochure and Web site. She has served as president of the West River Regional Tourism Council and NDACVB. ●

## State Tourism Conference

When Thomas Jefferson speaks, people should listen. Clay Jenkinson, a reeanctor who performs as the President who sent Lewis and Clark to the Pacific, was one of a number of speakers at the State Tourism Conference in Bismarck in March. Others included Governor John Hoeven, who spoke on the value of tourism to the economic health of North Dakota; Jane Eckert, who related her family's success in the agri-tourism business; and Krista Rahe, who spoke of the power of cross-selling and working together. "This year's conference was a huge success," said Tourism Director Sara Otte Coleman. "The program offered sessions for all of the sub-groups that make up our industry, while bringing us together to develop better tools to work together."

Sixteen breakout sessions offered insight into numerous tourism topics, including sales, Web sites, signage, Lewis and Clark training, lobbying, gift shops, service, rural issues, publicity and American Indian culture. The message also reached the halls of the Capitol during Tourism Day at the Legislature. Tourism representatives took advantage of the opportunity to pass on their concerns and success stories to state lawmakers. ●

## Northern exposure

North Dakota got good play in the media in March:

**AAA Home and Away:** "Tale of the Corps."

**AAA Western Journey:** "Lewis and Clark Trail."

**American Heritage:** "Lewis and Clark Trail," Segment on North Dakota.

**Connoisseur Magazine:** "Medora and the Badlands."

**Country Magazine:** "North Dakota ... This is God's Country" by Chuck Haney.

**Eskiltuna-Kuriren:** "Ranches in the Badlands" and "The Prairie State."

**North Dakota Living:** "U-Mary hosting Lewis and Clark National Signature event" and "A visit with tourism leader, Sara Otte Coleman." ●



Part of the North Dakota contingent at the Milwaukee Journal Sports Show joins outdoor television celebrity Tony Dean in the North Dakota Tourism Division booth. Dean spent time in the booth promoting North Dakota. Visiting with Dean were, from left, Kyle Blanchfield of Woodland Resort in Devils Lake, Mike Schell, a hunting and fishing guide from Devils Lake, Rodger Affeldt, a hunting and fishing guide from Garrison and Jim Torgerson of Lund's Landing near Williston.

### Successful sports show season concludes

New booth design and graphics, along with an enthusiastic staff, greeted visitors to the North Dakota Tourism booth during the recently completed sport

show season.

Staff members Deanne Keller, Scooter Pursley and Mark Zimmerman attended a number of shows in the Upper Midwest, continuing the



North Dakota Tourism Division Outdoor Promotions Coordinator Mark Zimmerman works the booth with a friend he picked up at the Milwaukee show.

promotion of *North Dakota Legendary*.

Whatever the inquiry, North Dakota had something to offer. From questions on fishing on Sakakawea, Devils Lake or any other of the numerous lakes and rivers, to places to camp, bicycle, golf, motorcycle, watch wildlife, visit historic sites or simply enjoy the wide-open spaces, our state became the chosen destination of many folks. Time and again people stated they are interested in

traveling to North Dakota when they learn of the wide variety of activities and attractions awaiting them.

A special guest at the Milwaukee Sport Show was a fantastic addition to the booth and overall promotion. Tony Dean, host of Tony Dean Outdoors, helped staff the booth the final weekend of the show. Literally hundreds of folks stopped by to visit with the outdoor recreation television and radio host who has a weekly show in the Milwaukee area. Tony is a great ambassador for the state — informing folks that the hunting and fishing in North Dakota is among the best on the North American continent.

We would ask each of you for your assistance in tracking our efforts. In visiting with your customers and clients, consider asking how they learned about North Dakota. Any feedback would help our office better market North Dakota when at the shows. ●

### Maah Daah Hey promotion night

About 80 enthusiastic mountain bikers and hikers braved a cold Minnesota March night for an informational session on the adventure that awaits them on the Maah Daah Hey Trail. Outdoors Promotions Coordinator Mark Zimmerman presented a program that provided first-time and returning riders with a little of the flavor of the trail, information on the outfitters and ranchers that offer their assistance and hospitality, as well as the dos and don'ts for tackling the trail.

"I answered questions for 30 to 40 minutes,"

Zimmerman stated, "fielding questions from where to buy groceries and backpacking stove fuel to inquiries if buffalo really can run that fast?"

Riders from the 2002 season shared their tales and great pictures — thanks to the Minnesota mountain bike guru Greg Pattison!

The Maah Daah Hey Trail is known in the Minneapolis and St. Paul areas. We will continue to promote all the great adventure that awaits cyclists in North Dakota. ●